

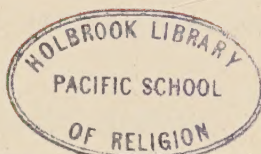
ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the : World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

EDITOR : JOHN GARRETT · 17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU · GENEVA · SWITZERLAND
TEL. 36 71 30 · CABLES OIKOUMENE U.S. ENQUIRIES: WCC, 156 FIFTH AVE. NEW YORK 10 : TEL. WATKINS 4-8551

No. 20/26th Year

22nd May, 1959.



On Other Pages

CCIA Leaders in Geneva for Foreign Ministers' Meeting	Page 2
First EACC Assembly Opens in Malaya	Page 3
Lutherans, Church of South India, Move Toward Union	Page 4
South African Roman Catholics Criticize Job Discrimination Bill . .	Page 4
Serbian Church Officials Honoured	Page 5
In Brief	Page 5

Document

The Arab Refugee Problem	Page 8
------------------------------------	--------

CCIA Officers Make Plea for Arab Refugees

(Geneva) - In a letter to United Nations secretary general, Dag Hammarskjöld, the officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs have asked for a constructive new effort to solve the eleven-year-old problem of the Arab refugees in Palestine.

The appeal, which was delivered personally to Dr. Ralph Bunche, the representative of Mr. Hammarskjöld, visualises "a new deal for the refugee", including "a home and a job, continuing relief until he is established", and "compensation from Israel, or, and as alternative, the possibility of ultimate repatriation to Israel".

It is suggested that member governments of the United Nations, in addition to maintaining relief, should give "much more massive sums of money" for constructive solutions.

Commenting on the appeal, Dr. Elfan Rees, permanent representative of the CCIA in Europe, who was instrumental in preparing the appeal and in calling the two Beirut conferences of churches and missions to consider the Arab refugee problem in 1951 and 1956, said that it was a "call for a shift in emphasis. The change in stress from relief to works is an attempt to move in the direction of solving the problem," Dr. Rees declared. "This will imply no diminution, but an increase of governmental support," he said. "Relief must be maintained, but there must be a move toward solution."

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian Movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items. EPS may be freely reproduced in any form with acknowledgment.

Dr. Rees went on to underline that the churches would not abandon, but continue their present work for Arab refugees, but that this would be difficult if there is no progress toward solution.

The message to Mr. Hammarskjöld was signed by CCIA chairman Sir Kenneth Grubb of London, and the commission's director, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, in addition to Dr. Rees.

The officers of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council will meet at Spittal, Austria, early in August, to consider the recommendations on the future of the Arab refugee problem which Mr. Hammarskjöld is expected to make in the near future.

The full text of the CCIA officers' letter is on page 8.

EPS, Geneva

CCIA Leaders in Geneva for Foreign Ministers' Meeting

(Geneva) - Officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs have been in Geneva for the opening of the talks between the foreign ministers of the great powers.

Contacts with the various delegations have been established by Sir Kenneth Grubb of the United Kingdom, the commission's chairman, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde of the United States, director, and Dr. Elfan Rees, the commission's permanent representative in Europe. The CCIA is a joint agency of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches.

A message delivered to the foreign ministers of the USSR, France, the United Kingdom and the USA said that the churches' representatives were in Geneva "to symbolise the concern of Christians in many parts of the world - Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican - over the problem of Berlin and Germany in the context of the total international situation". The CCIA officers have frequently been on the scene at international conferences in recent years.

The message goes on to say that the foreign ministers, "in seeking to relieve tension and to promote peace" should "heed the claims of justice and freedom". The CCIA officers say that "it is our particular anxiety that any agreements reached shall ensure the exercise of commonly accepted human rights, including freedom to manifest religion or belief in teaching, worship, practice and observance".

The message closes with the assurance that Christians everywhere are praying for the conference.

EPS, Geneva

Protestant Centre Proposed for Puerto Rico

(San German, Puerto Rico) - A Protestant centre to house offices of denominations and church agencies has been recommended by a Protestant Cooperative Planning Conference held in San German.

Sponsored by the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico, the conference brought together representatives of mission boards, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, the Committee on Missionary Cooperation in Latin America and the International Missionary Council. Appointment in the near future of a student worker at the University of Puerto Rico was announced during the conference.

Taking part were Methodists, United Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, United Evangelicals, Mennonites, Brethren and Lutherans.

EPS, Geneva

First EACC Assembly Opens in Malaya

(Kuala Lumpur) - In the quiet of Venning Chapel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, on May 14, representatives from 42 churches and Christian councils in 14 East Asia countries stood silently to signify their acceptance of the constitution of the East Asia Christian Conference (see EPS No. 18).

"We are here," Bishop Enrique C. Sobrepena of the Philippines and conference chairman, said, "on mandate by our churches to accept a plan and actually put it into operation, to bring completeness to the natural circles around which by nature we are to move and make them the means by which we may attain the wholeness of our life. Here as we gather we find ourselves predominantly from East Asia, and yet from all the world, giving fuller expression of obedience to the call of our common Lord."

In response to Bishop Sobrepena's challenge, the representatives of the churches and councils stood as U Kyaw Than, conference administrative secretary, called the names of each delegation, marking the acceptance of the EACC constitution and formally creating the conference as a permanent organ for continuing cooperation among the churches in East Asia.

U Kyaw Than said in a speech on the opening day that the EACC "is a fellowship of churches in Asia which seek to render their obedience to their common Lord. As such it cannot identify itself as a body with any power bloc in the world struggle going on today."

Other speakers during the opening days of the 10-day conference included Mr. M.M. Thomas of India, who defined nationalism as "a positive struggle for nation building. Christianity must participate in this nation building," he said, "in order to assist in filling the vacuum that has been created by the breakdown of old patterns. In this formative period of the basis of new nations, Christians should take their share in helping define goals of life, for that is what is at stake."

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin of the Church of South India, general secretary-elect of the International Missionary Council, called for bold experiments in new forms of the Christian ministry, using non-professional and non-paid ministers in local congregations. He emphasized that the basic Christian witness depends not on the ordained ministry but on the laity witnessing in the daily round of secular activities.

Looking at the resurgence of Buddhism in Asia, Dr. Pe Maung Tin, vice-chancellor of Rangoon University, told the conference that Christianity has not been able to dent the thought of the average Buddhist. Because of their colonial past, he said, the Burmese people have looked upon Christianity as presented by Western missionaries as another "trick to enslave them". They felt, Dr. Tin added, that having lost their country to the conquerors, they were now in danger of losing their country and culture to the missionaries.

Attending the conference are 180 delegates from Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaya, New Zealand, Okinawa, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Observers are present from the Cameroons, Kenya, Nigeria, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United States. Also attending are representatives of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

EPS, Geneva

Lutherans, Church of South India, Move Toward Union

(Bangalore, India) - The Lutheran churches in South India and the Church of South India have been advised by a joint theological commission from both bodies that "the degree of doctrinal agreement between us is such as to warrant a closer fellowship than now exists between our churches". The churches have been urged "to take action to secure such closer fellowship in practice".

The recommendations came at the close of a meeting of the Joint Commission at Bangalore in mid-April, which removed Lutheran hesitations about the place of the "historic episcopate" in the Church of South India, a union of former Anglicans, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians.

Specific recommendations looking toward union include preparation of a catechism to be used in the CSI and in Lutheran churches, organization of regional conferences to discuss controversial points about the Church and the ministry and the drawing up of a Constitution and Doctrinal Statement based on the work already done by the Joint Theological Commission.

In an explanatory section on bishops at the end of an "Agreed Statement on the Church and the Ministry", the Joint Commission affirms that "the exercise of oversight (Episkope) was early entrusted by the Church to one bishop in each area. This ordering was for many centuries universal and is still the accepted form among the majority of Christians. We do not hold that it is essential for the existence of the Church, or for the ministry and the sacraments," the statement continues, "or that God has bound Himself to grant through it greater blessing, authority or grace than through other forms of the Church's ministry. It has been and can be grievously misused, as can every gift of God. But we see a value in it as expressing through a person the oversight which is a vital part of the pastoral ministry within the Church.

"However," the statement concludes, "the presence or absence of episcopacy ought not by itself to determine the relationship of one church with another".

The Church of South India has over 1,000,000 adherents. The Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India represents ten churches with about 653,300 members.
EPS, Geneva


South African Roman Catholics Criticize Job Discrimination Bill

(Capetown) - Three leading Roman Catholic officials in South Africa have condemned a new government-sponsored bill which would bar non-white workers from higher paying jobs in industry and commerce which are "reserved" for whites.

The bill has already passed its third reading in the South African parliament and observers say it seems certain it will become law shortly.

"I cannot but condemn the government's policy of job reservation whereby, solely on the grounds of colour, the coloured man is excluded from certain avenues of employment," Archbishop Owen McCann of Capetown wrote. Others whose similar views were published in the Roman Catholic newspaper, "The Southern Cross", were Archbishop Denis E. Hurley of Durban and Bishop Ernest A. Green of Port Elizabeth.

"How can Christian men with the law of love engraved on minds and hearts," Archbishop Hurley wrote, "coolly, rationally and methodically, year after year, pile injustice in the name of law, a name venerable and sacred by its divine association but becoming synonymous with misery and despair for three quarters of the population of South Africa?"
EPS, Geneva



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

Serbian Church Officials Honoured

(Beirut) - During an Easter pilgrimage, a delegation from the Serbian Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia, led by His Holiness Patriarch German, were honoured by government and church officials in the Holy Land.

The Order of Saints Peter and Paul was awarded Patriarch German in Damascus, Syria, by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; President Chehab of the Lebanese Republic decorated the Patriarch with the highest rank of the Order of the Cedars of Lebanon; and on May 3, the Orthodox Easter, the Patriarch, bishops and other members of the delegation received the Order of the Holy Sepulchre from His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Benedictos.

During the trip, policy talks were held for the first time between Patriarch German and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul, described as aimed at improving cooperation between the two Patriarchates. EPS, Geneva

In Brief

The Very Rev. George F. MacLeod, leader of the Iona Community and Chaplain to the Queen, will deliver the annual John Knox House Lecture in Geneva, Switzerland, on May 30. The subject is "John Knox and Today". The John Knox House is an international student hostel and ecumenical centre supported by the United Presbyterian Church USA in cooperation with the National Protestant Church of Geneva.

* *

A group of British Anglicans is organizing a pilgrimage to France to pray for Christian unity. The journey, September 5 to 9, will include a visit to the tombs of Roman Catholic "apostles of unity" Fernand Portal and Paul Couturier near Lyon and prayer at some French Roman Catholic centres of pilgrimage. Leaders of the pilgrimage, which also plans to visit the French Reformed Men's Community of Taizé, include Anglican monks of the Community of the Resurrection.

* *

Premier Constantine Karamanlis of Greece has received the Holy Cross of the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate. The award, in recognition of Mr. Karamanlis' promotion of friendship between Greece and Turkey, was made in Istanbul while the premier was on a tour of Turkey.

* *

The Very Rev. Francis Carl Rowinski of Chicago has been consecrated bishop of the Western Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church of America, in ceremonies at Chicago's Cathedral of All Saints.

* *

Canon H.N. Hunter of Gambia has been appointed as chaplain to West Africans now living in Britain. He arrived in London in May, after his appointment by the bishops of the Province of West Africa.

* *

Special services in two historic East European churches have been scheduled for May, marking the re-erection of destroyed buildings. In Cieszyn (Teschen) Poland, the 250th anniversary of Upper Silesia's renovated Church of Jesus is set for May 24. Hungarian Lutherans are celebrating the restoration of their war-damaged Nemesker church, built in 1732.

* *

Representatives of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Nair tribes have rejected invitations to attend a government-sponsored conference to discuss differences regarding the implementation of the controversial Education Act recently passed in the Communist state of Kerala in India. Both Roman Catholic and Nair officials have said that they would not reopen their schools in the autumn, in protest over provisions of the bill (see EPS No. 19). A government official has said that the government will not back down on the act or any of its provisions.

* *

Crisanto Cardinal Luque, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bogota and Primate of Colombia, has died in Bogota at the age of 70.

* *

The world president of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, Mr. Reuben R. Figuhr, has urged other religious groups with similar beliefs to unite. But, he added, there is "no chance" that the 1,500,000-member Adventist group would ever join any other church. "We have distinctive beliefs and we could not violate them," he said.

* *

The resignation of Bishop Photios of Paphos, who ranked second to Archbishop Makarios, has been accepted by the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus.

* *

Reports of a conversation between Fidel Castro of Cuba and three members of a committee of the United Protestant Church of Cuba say that the new government head does not intend to restore religious instruction in the state schools.

* *

Because of a recent rise in anti-semitism in West Germany, the Evangelical student organization has sent a statement to parents and teachers, urging them not to conceal the guilt of the German people in the past, but to face it honestly and frankly. The statement goes on to say: "We beg everyone holding responsibility in politics or in law to take serious steps to prevent Germans both at home and abroad from being guilty of a revival of anti-semitic propaganda and anti-semitic activities against our fellow citizens."

* *

The need for modernising the Roman Catholic press has been stressed by Pope John XXIII in an audience with Italian Catholic journalists at the Vatican. The Pope said that in the past the Catholic newspapers and magazines had not been able to compete with the secular press because they did not devote enough care to the technical and organizational side of publishing. But he emphasized the importance of the Catholic daily press and told the journalists, "Create papers, books and publications of real value and you will be Apostles."

* *

Protestant services may now be held in any premises in Argentina without special permission, as long as the Ministry of Religious Affairs is informed, according to a new government order which ends the requirement for obtaining permission for all church gatherings. Statistical information including the number of members, names of ministers and addresses of churches and parish houses must also be sent to the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

* *

Protestant services may now be held in any premises in Argentina without special permission, as long as the Ministry of Religious Affairs is informed, according to a new government order which ends the requirement for obtaining permission for all church gatherings. Statistical information including the number of members, names of ministers and addresses of churches and parish houses must also be sent to the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

* *

The Protestant "Collège Cévenol" at Chambon-sur-Lignon in France marked its twentieth anniversary this month by opening a new dormitory for girls. The secondary school for both boys and girls was founded by Pastor André Trocmé and Pastor E. Theis and has 400 students, more than 50 of them from abroad.

* *

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland has denied reports from Northern Rhodesia that the closing of two Church of Scotland Mission hospitals in that country was connected with racial disturbances. "It is entirely a matter of shortage of staff and finance", a spokesman of the Mission in Edinburgh said (see EPS No. 18).

* *

A Protestant spokesman at the first French national congress of parents of school-children receiving free education, held at Caen, said that Protestant parents defended free education and those who sent their children to private schools were willing to pay for it. He opposed state subsidies for private schools.

* *

Celebration of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the first Baptist church in Amsterdam included a reception by the Lord Mayor of Amsterdam and a united service in the Mennonite church. An address, stressing the ecumenical breadth of view of John Smyth, the church's founder, in the closing days of his life, was given by Dr. Ernest A. Payne, who is vice-chairman of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee.

* *

Possible reunification of the Polish National Catholic Church of America and in Poland has been discussed by officials of the two bodies at a meeting in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The church was set up in 1904 in Scranton; the church in Poland broke ties with the mother church in America in 1951. Taking part in the discussions were Prime Bishop Leon Grochowski of the US and Dr. Maximillian Rode and the Rev. Thaddeus Majewski of Poland.

EPS, Geneva

Document

The Arab Refugee Problem

(A letter to the United Nations' Secretary-General, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, from officers of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a joint agency of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. See page 1.)

You will know from our Beirut Conferences and more particularly from their substantial relief programmes that our churches and missions have a very great concern for the continuing plight of the Arab refugees. That concern has been deepened in recent months by our knowledge that the mandate of UNRWA expires in June 1960 and that, in the Thirteenth General Assembly there was voiced a disinclination to extend it.

It is certain that, whatever governments may do, the churches will not abandon the Arab refugees, nor will they cease their advocacy for the needs of the "other claimants for relief". At the same time we are convinced that what the churches can do will not be enough, moreover, we are apprehensive that, if there is no progress towards solutions, it will become increasingly difficult to continue to focus Christian concern on this particular refugee problem at a time when so many others challenge us.

We take hope from the knowledge that you yourself have undertaken to advise the Fourteenth General Assembly as to what the future course of action should be and it is for this reason that we venture to address you in the following terms:

1. While we deplore the failure to solve this problem after ten years of endeavour we have no criticism of UNRWA's magnificent work as a relief agency and we are most grateful for its devoted leadership. We also recognize that, had more governments contributed more generously, the "self-help" projects, which offer so much hope of solutions for individual families, would have prospered better.
2. We do not believe that the progressive pauperisation of these refugees ought to be perpetuated but we are nevertheless convinced that a continuing relief programme on a long-term - though possibly diminishing - basis is essential and inevitable. We are informed that almost one-third of the older refugees are now incapable of employment and re-establishment, moreover those others, not yet incapacitated, who might accept re-establishment would need continuing care and maintenance until their establishment was firm.
3. The preceding paragraph notwithstanding, we regret that UNRWA has been forced, by political and financial considerations, into the role of a "relief" agency to the almost total exclusion of "works". We are convinced that, in any new dispensation, relief should become ancillary to works and should indeed become conditional on works being made financially and, above all, politically possible.
4. We recognize that such a change of emphasis must depend, in the first instance, on the goodwill of the host governments, but we do not think this will be forth coming without some initial action on the part of Israel. We welcome most warmly the recent offer by Israel of compensation, more particularly as it was made in a much less rigid context than that of total settlement. Nevertheless we do not think this is enough. Our second Beirut Conference called for the recognition of the moral right to repatriation. We have no illusions as to the

practicability, on political and economic grounds, of unrestricted repatriation but we feel that the possibility of repatriation - under international control and possibly on an annual quota basis - must be one element in an overall settlement.

5. Given such a move we then think that the main emphasis in a new programme should be on building up an economically and socially useful future for the refugees by equipping them in such a way that they can establish themselves. We are not sanguine that the present political climate is propitious for large-scale resettlement programmes in the host countries but we do believe that, given adequate resources, a family by family "self-help" and "homes and jobs" movement would soon acquire momentum.

6. A final onus lies upon member governments of the United Nations who, in our view, must be made to realise that in addition to maintaining the relief programme, much more massive sums of money will be required if we are to move towards solutions, and that more money must be contributed by more governments.

7. We therefore visualise a new deal for the refugee in which he is offered, as a comprehensive offer: (i) a home and a job; (ii) continuing relief until he is established; and (iii) compensation from Israel; or, (iv) and as an alternative, the possibility of ultimate repatriation to Israel.

8. We do not know whether such a programme could be implemented by UNRWA as it is now organized but it may well be that a new agency untrammelled by the past, and by past agreements, could more easily make a new beginning.

The officers of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council are convening a special consultation in August and we shall at that time anxiously consider the recommendations you will propose to the General Assembly.

This will be a matter of great importance to us because, as our own programmes are so closely geared to those of UNRWA, we need good notice of what the future is likely to be.

We hold ourselves ready to discuss these proposals with you if you think they have any merit in the present situation.

O. Frederick Nolde
Director

Kenneth G. Grubb
Chairman

Elfan Rees
Representative in Europe

EPS, Geneva

